

WOLF PACKS

HUMAN PIRATES IN BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC

Experimental rules by James Snee and Frank Court

'Wolf Packs' – these pirate groups were called, but to Leoten Semper they seemed more like scavenging jackals, attacking weak and vulnerable prey but fleeing at the approach of any larger predator.

from Wolf Pack by Gordon Rennie



On the fringes of Imperium systems lie many renegades, exiles and mercenaries. Without the guidance and protection of the Emperor this human flotsam and jetsam often fall into the service of darker powers, but many do not. Hiding away on fringe worlds, uninhabited moons or in asteroid belts these men form pirate fleets. Their ranks are filled with deserters from the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy, as well as those fleeing harsh Imperial justice and sentences in distant systems. Many are rebellious groups, who see themselves as freedom fighters against the tyranny of Imperial rule.

Pirate bases act as a safe haven for every criminal, miscreant, heretic and rebel throughout the Imperium. They survive by living off the Imperium's merchant and supply convoys. Such pirate havens are a constant thorn in the Imperium's side, raiding outposts and isolated colonies and ambushing transport vessels. Pirate fleets are an assembled mis-mash of stolen and salvaged vessels, often-refitted transports taken in raids. They lack the firepower to fight fleet engagements against heavy armoured and armed Imperial warships,

so must launch surprise ambushes and hit and run attacks, always using their wits to stay one step ahead of Imperial Navy vessels.

One of the Imperial Navy's many duties is to hunt down pirate bases and keep the shipping lanes safe for merchant traffic. Pirate bases, which are not found and destroyed, have been known to grow and grow, gathering many ships and men until a system will be so infested with raiders and plunderers that it threatens the safe rule and stability of the system. Then the Navy must launch a major operation in the area, sweeping through asteroid fields and sending away teams to search out and clear bases and pirate nests. In the event of a major attack the pirate fleet will often scatter rather than give battle, fleeing to create new splitter groups in surrounding systems. Many ships which could be committed at the front line are tied up defending convoys from the pirate 'wolf packs' as they are nick-named by Imperial crews.

PIRATE LEADERSHIP

Pirate leaders find it difficult to control their wayward forces, a pirate fleet will often be made up of many different factions and

individuals all looking out for themselves, rather than fighting for the common good. They seek the safety of numbers, but are always trying to steal a march on other ship crews, to get the lion's share of the plunder. Infighting and murder is not uncommon amongst the unsavoury outlaws of a pirate fleet.

When rolling on the starting Leadership of pirate ships modify the dice roll on the Leadership table by -1. (see page 10 of the BFG rulebook). This gives pirate ships a Leadership of between 6 and 8.

PIRATE BATTLEZONES

It is rare for pirates to operate in certain areas of space. They do not operate in Deep Space, as there is little there for the fleet to plunder, and it is normally too far from their bases, making operations in these distant regions hazardous. Unless the pirates are very bold or powerful they do not attack in the primary biosphere, close to well defended inhabited planets, where defence monitors and patrol ships can respond quickly to their raids.

Most pirate fleets stay close to their bases, usually in the Outer Reaches or the Mercurial Zones.

If you are playing with a Pirate fleet, then the Pirate player can choose to play in either of these zones, unless both players decide by mutual consent to play in another zone.

PIRATE RAID

It is a foolhardy pirate leader who dares take on the might of the Navy in a fleet engagement. Pirate commanders may always choose to roll on the following scenario generator. If both players agree then they can play any scenario. Roll a D6:

1 Blockade Run. The pirates are attempting to escape the blockade of their bases.

2 Surprise Attack. The pirates are the attackers.

3 Raiders. The pirates are the attackers

4-5 Convoy Run. The most common form of pirate attack is against merchant shipping.

6 Planetary Assault. Pirates do not restrict themselves to ship targets, sometimes they attack isolated colonies, mining facilities and outposts. Treat such raids as planetary assaults.

SHIP DESCRIPTIONS

Pirate fleets commonly use all of the following types of ship:

ICONOCLAST CLASS DESTROYER

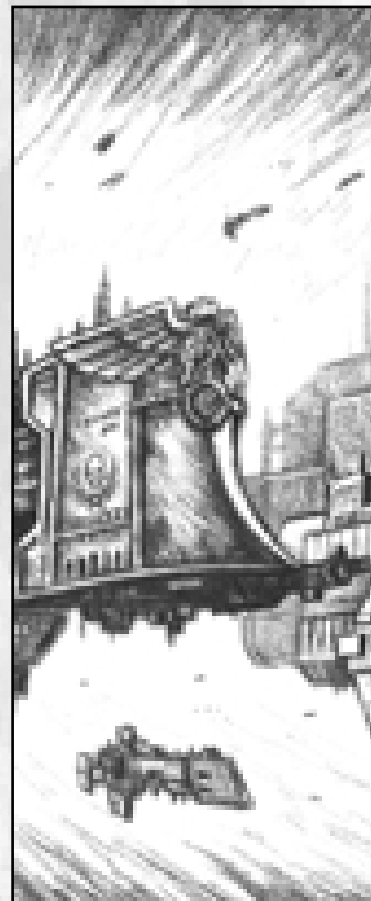
Roving squadrons of Iconoclast class destroyers have been a constant peril to shipping. Mainly used by pirates and other lawless bands, the Iconoclast is similar in design to a variety of small escort ships turned out by almost every shipyard. Although compact, they carry a fearsome amount of firepower for their size and when encountered in numbers can be a threat to even a capital ship.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	30cm	90°	1	4+	1
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC		
Weapons battery	30cm	3	Left/front/right		

IDOLATOR CLASS RAIDER

The Idolator class raider is something of an enigma. Little is known of the whereabouts of its construction, though rumour has it that they are built on the excommunicated forge world of Xana II near the Eye of Terror. Idolators incorporate many systems and features which are of obviously non-human origin, probably bought or stolen from other space-faring races. There seems to be a large amount of these within the fleets of the Wolf Pack.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	30cm	90°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC		
Weapons battery	45cm	2	Left/front/right		
Lance battery	30cm	1	Front		



SWORD CLASS FRIGATE

The venerable Sword class frigate has ably served Battlefleet Obscuras for thousands of years. Every part of the vessel's design and construction has been tried and tested in innumerable engagements. Unfortunately, a few have fallen into the hands of Wolf Pack pirates. Like all ships of Imperial origin these are highly prized by the pirates.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort 1	25cm	90°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	4		Left/front/right

FIRESTORM CLASS FRIGATE

Firestorm class frigates are a comparatively recent innovation within Battlefleet Obscuras. The design was created in an effort to balance the manoeuvrability of escort class ships with the hitting power of a lance armament. The Firestorm is built around a Sword class hull with major reconfiguration of the central laser cores to direct power to a prow-mounted cannon.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort 1	25cm	90°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	4		Left/front/right

COBRA CLASS DESTROYER

Cobra class escorts are extremely versatile, making them a favoured vessel for scouting, patrolling and raiding. The irony being that the Wolf Pack stock of cobras were originally sent to root out the pirates but were subsequently captured and used against the Imperium.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	30cm	90°	1	4+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow torpedoes		30cm	2		Front
Weapons battery		30cm	1		Left/front/right

DEFENCE MONITOR

Defence monitors are dedicated defence ships, designed to hammer the enemy at close range. Much of the power generation systems are linked to armaments rather than engines, which means that they pack a lot of weaponry for their size, but are relatively hard to manoeuvre.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	10cm	45°	2	6+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	8		Left/front/right
Lance battery		30cm	1		Front

SYSTEM SHIP

System ships are a mix of short-range strike vessels and other starships incapable of interstellar travel. They often have civilian crews, making them particularly easy to capture and lack the sophisticated targeting systems, superior engines and manoeuvring thrusters of a warship, but when used in numbers can still pose a real threat.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Defence/1	15cm	45°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	3		Left/front/right



TRANSPORT

Unescorted transport ships are easy prey for pirates. The majority will have been taken in raids on the lightly armed convoys these ships escort. Once the cargo has been used or sold the vessels themselves will often be put to good use.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort 1	15cm	45°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Dorsal Weapons battery		15cm	2		Left/front/right

ARMED FREIGHTER

Often freighters operating in dangerous areas will install military gun batteries and fire control systems. They sometimes even help!

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort 1	15cm	45°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Dorsal Weapons battery		15cm	3		Left/front/right

Special Rules

An armed Freightier reduces its cargo capacity to carry bigger guns and reactors. It therefore counts as only half a freighter in scenarios that involve them.

ESCORT CARRIER

Due to the lack of availability of carriers in a pirate fleet, freighter hulls are often converted to 'escort carriers', installing fighter support equipment into their cramped cargo bays and launching craft out of the cargo doors.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort 1	15cm	45°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Dorsal Weapons battery		15cm	2		Left/front/right
Starboard Launch Bay		Fighters 30cm Bombers 20cm	1		—
Port Launch Bay		Fighters 30cm Bombers 20cm	1		—

Special Rules

Escort carriers do not count as freighters for victory conditions. They make "Re-load Ordnance" checks at -1.

FIRE SHIP

Fire ship is the name given to a variety of captured vessels and other ships that are of no further use to the pirates. They are packed full of unstable plasma and incendiary explosives and guided into the enemy fleet by a skeleton crew, who sets the ship to explode and then evacuates in escape pods – although there were several incidences of fire ship crews staying with their vessel to the end to ensure that they caused as much damage as possible. The massive explosion caused by a fire ship detonation will pass through a ship's shields and can cause horrendous damage to the structure of a vessel caught within its blast.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	15cm	45°	1	5+	1

Special Rules

The controlling player can detonate a fire ship at any point in its Movement phase, inflicting D3 Fire critical hits on every ship within 3D6cm. As with any escort suffering a critical hit, escorts within the fire ship's blast will be automatically destroyed, as are any Ordnance markers. Remove the detonated fire ship and put a Blast marker in its place.

Q-SHIP

A favorite tactic of pirates is to have freighters fitted with hidden guns and upgraded shield generators, mixed in with convoys as 'Q-ships'. These vessels would remain undercover until the enemy came within close range, at which time they would reveal their surprising firepower.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	15cm	45°	2	5+	2
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC		
Lance battery	30cm	1	Front		
Weapons battery	30cm	3	Left/Front/Right		

Special Rules

Q-ships are not declared as such when deployed on the table; the owning player must write down which freighters are Q-ships at the start of the game. The owning player may reveal the ship as a Q-ship at any time during the game. It is also revealed as a Q-ship if it is hit twice by enemy fire (thus producing two Blast markers). It is permissible for the owning player to 'hold back' one of his turrets if the Q-ship is attacked by enemy attack craft (to avoid revealing it), but this is a dangerous gamble. Q-ships do not count as freighters for victory conditions.

SUPER HEAVY TROOP TRANSPORT

As well as their military role super heavy transports are also used as bulk ore or grain carriers, and damaged vessels have been converted into supply bases, hospital vessels and forward repair facilities for fleets operating in isolated or primitive systems. All making very tempting targets for pirates.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/2	15cm	45°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC		
Dorsal Weapons battery	15cm	2	Left/front/right		

Special Rules

Notes: Super heavy transports do not have the powerful drives that are fitted to warships. When using All Ahead Full orders only add +3D6cm to their speed. They also reduce their randomly rolled Leadership by one, so they have a Leadership between 5 and 8. Super heavy transports have 'Special' for their points value as they are only used as objectives in missions.

FAST CLIPPER

Fast clippers are extremely fast vessels for their size. They utilize improved main drive engines that take up more than half of the vessel's total mass. Most of the power from these engineering plants is directed to propulsion, these ships are virtually unarmed and rely solely on their great speed to keep them out of trouble.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	30cm	90°	1	5+	1

Special Rules

Fast clippers are very lightly armed and cannot be used as Q-ships. High-performance main engines allow them to move +5D6cm on All Ahead Full special orders. They have half the capacity of a standard transport and suffer -1 leadership. Its planetary assault transport point value is 1. These ships can substitute Strength 2, range 15cm left/front/right dorsal weapons batteries for a -5cm speed reduction at no additional cost.

GALAXY CLASS ARMED FREIGHTER

Galaxy class armed freighters are an ancient transport design dating from the very founding of the Imperium. Radically different from, and for the most part replaced by the much higher-capacity Imperial transports, these vessels retain a much more substantial weapons fit than the ships that replaced them, since they were originally designed for a time when interstellar space was much more hostile before the great crusades.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	15cm	45°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC		
Dorsal Weapons battery	30cm	3	Left/front/right		

Special Rules

Galaxy class ships are a design radically different from current Imperial class transports and are considerably better armed, but they can only transport half the capacity. They are restricted to +3D6cm when under All Ahead Full special orders and suffer -1 Leadership. Its planetary assault transport points value is 1 (+40 points) One or more can be modified as a Q-ship when operating in large groups.

WOLF PACK HUMAN PIRATES FLEET LIST

FLEET COMMANDER

0-1 Pirate Chief

You may include one Pirate Chief in your fleet, who must be assigned to a ship and adds +1 to its Leadership, to a maximum of 9. If the fleet is worth over 500 points then you must include the Pirate Chief.

Pirate Chief (Ld +1)50 pts

You may purchase Fleet Commander re-rolls for your Pirate Chief by paying the following cost listed below:

One re-roll+25 pts

Two re-rolls+50 pts

FLEET VESSELS

A Pirate fleet cannot be more than 1,000 points.

0-6 Sword35 pts

0-6 Firestorm40 pts

0-6 Cobra30 pts

Iconoclast class Destroyer30 pts

Idolator class Raider45 pts

Defence Monitor60 pts

System ship20 pts

0-3 Fire ships10 pts

Transport10 pts

Armed Freighter20 pts

Escort carrier60 pts

Q-ship60 pts

Super Heavy Troop Transport20 pts

Fast Clipper30 pts

Galaxy class Armed Freighter20 pts

ORDNANCE

Any ship with launch bays may choose to carry assault boats at an additional cost of +5 points. Ship with torpedoes are armed with normal torpedoes and boarding torpedoes.

